

## CHAPTER 12

### POST MORALE

Post morale is easy to sense but difficult to define. Its quality is pervasive enough to be detectable from the moment of arrival. It is accepted as an important factor in overseas life and is composed of many complex environmental and personality factors. The quality of leadership, health, security, and housing conditions, the host country attitudes, and work satisfaction are key components of post morale. Equally important, however, is the collective impact of individual attitudes and actions. Morale can change with the arrival or departure of a single person or family. Group morale is influenced by complaining or by enthusiasm. Post morale is most healthy when a strong sense of enthusiasm and dedication to a common goal exists, thus unifying the group to a common mission.

All employees and family members affect mission morale. The conduit between the community and post management is the Community Liaison Office (CLO) Coordinator. The CLO Coordinator is the morale officer at post and concentrates on pre-arrival issues, assimilation at post, and ongoing support programs. The following checklist suggests ways that all in the community may contribute to building and maintaining high post morale:

#### **Prior to Arrival at Post, Have I:**

- ( ) Contacted the CLO Coordinator at post to inform her/him of my arrival and to inquire about services CLO offers?
- ( ) Properly notified post of my arrival and of those who are accompanying me? Asked the people to whom I have written if I might run an errand for them before I leave the United States?
- ( ) If married, suggested my spouse write ahead? Found the names and addresses of youngsters with whom my children could correspond for answers to their questions?
- ( ) Informed the Administrative Officer or Staff that I am traveling with a pet?
- ( ) Made all personal and financial arrangements prior to leaving the United States?
- ( ) Learned as much about the country and its language as possible? Studied the language, when possible, while in the United States?
- ( ) Planned arrival at a time, if given a choice, that is convenient to those who may meet newcomers?
- ( ) Packed carry-on bags and air freight wisely and with the necessary items, to manage in the event pieces of luggage are lost or the post does not have an arrival kit available?

**While at Post, Have I:**

- ( ) Expressed appreciation to those who have helped acquaint me with my new office and community?
- ( ) Attended all briefing and post orientation programs? Made arrangements for my spouse and older children also to attend and to obtain the proper Embassy ID cards?
- ( ) Insured that family members are familiar with local customs and courtesies?
- ( ) Aided new arrivals to the mission? Shared information and contacts?
- ( ) Included colleagues in social functions who might otherwise have limited opportunity to attend such events? Invited those who might be missing family gatherings to attend special holiday events? Remembered to invite others' houseguests, relatives, or official visitors?
- ( ) Sent a guest list and, if appropriate, an explanation of purpose to colleagues invited to representational functions? As a guest, shared responsibility for the success of representational functions organized by mission colleagues?
- ( ) Studied post emergency and security plans and explained them to my family to help them feel secure about what to do in a sudden emergency or evacuation? Prepared all documents needed in the event of an emergency?
- ( ) Been responsive to colleagues during such emergencies as illness, periods of culture shock, or when they have been required to travel and leave children at post?
- ( ) Explained my responsibilities to new arrivals to the post?
- ( ) Shared books, music, video tapes, catalogs, games, sports equipment, and other items that are in scarce supply at post?
- ( ) Developed good communication with the nationals of the mission?
- ( ) Brought home from the office publications and bulletins of interest to my family?
- ( ) Supported my family's activities? Attended school functions, shared chauffeuring, chaperoning, scout work, and other activities?
- ( ) Seen the country, practiced the language, and met new friends?
- ( ) Been an active member of the mission, sharing ideas, and working with others to generate a supporting climate for all elements of the community? Recognized the contributions of others?
- ( ) Given time to the commissary association, school board, American club council, or other organization from which I derive benefit?

**Prior to Departure from Post, Have I:**

- ( ) Organized records (and office) so my successor will benefit from all I have learned, and the post will not suffer from discontinuity?
- ( ) Written my successor about the post to assist him or her?
- ( ) Made proper farewells to all who helped me throughout the tour?
- ( ) Left with the appropriate officials any suggestions I have for enhancing post morale?

**Prior to Arrival at My Next Post, Have I:**

- ( ) Acquainted myself with living conditions, costs, and school facilities? Brought home and reviewed Post Reports, library materials, reports of colleagues' experiences or photos of the new area? Shared this information with my family?
- ( ) Consciously prepared myself and family members for the move? Prepared my immediate family for our departure to next assignment?